



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY

Professional Learning Communities Guidance

For Collaboration Time



Teaching and Learning Branch

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Introduction to Professional Learning Communities

This Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) Guidance serves to support the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) districts and schools in their development of PLCs.

DoDEA recognizes the benefits and research that PLCs provide DoDEA schools and that PLCs are integral to support the College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) implementation. The benefits of PLCs are:

- Student learning increases when teachers examine and improve their practice.
- Collaborative professional practice reduces isolation and promotes sharing with and learning from colleagues.
- The responsibility for every student's learning is shared by all.
- A collective culture of collaboration fosters “a personal commitment to rigorous training [and] continuous striving for excellence” combined with a deep appreciation of and response to evidence and feedback and a desire to improve and change (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008 p. 87; DuFour, R., & Fullan, M, 2013)

Time allocated for PLCs is sacred to the work of the team and should not be used for any other purpose. This Guidance also serves as the means for professional development and resources to support the PLCs.

What are PLCs

In a school with a high-functioning PLC, each staff member is committed to high levels of learning for all students. In PLCs, collaborative teams:




- Work together interdependently to achieve common goals linked to the purpose of learning for all students and staff;
- Promote a collaborative culture focused on shared leadership and responsibility for the school climate;
- Are a key ingredient to foster a change in culture that would ultimately promote and sustain change and close the achievement gap;
- Serve as the primary model for innovative best practices and curriculum and assessment changes;
- Support an aligned curriculum, promote vertical teaming, and promote greater teacher interaction and collaboration;
- Reflect on learning, practices, and student results to improve teaching and student learning;
- Focus on continuous learning and professional growth; and
- Build leadership capacity that will result in all students achieving at a high level.

A PLC is a structured form of collaboration that focuses on making decisions that are grounded in evidence, accumulating and circulating knowledge and ideas, providing one another with

support that improves the effectiveness of teaching, and creating a culture that both increases teachers’ confidence and encourages them to be more open to—and actively engaged in—a process of continuous improvement and change.

Developing a Culture of Collaboration

The development of PLCs is characterized by a deepening culture of collaboration (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Every educator is responsible for the development and continuity of a collaborative culture. The progressions of a PLC can be seen as a *continuum*, moving from a culture of isolation to one of highly effective collaborative decision making. The Stages of Collaboration best practices (pg.5 and chart) support and guide the district, school and PLC teams in a continuum of growth. The following provide a view of how communities and learning communities are different from and encompassed in becoming a PLC.

<p>Communities</p> 	<p>Work occurs in continuing groups and relationships, with a commitment and collective responsibility for a common education purpose and where educators improve practice for that purpose as well as caring about each other’s lives and dignity as professionals and people.</p>
<p>Learning Communities</p> 	<p>The process of improvement is heavily informed by professional learning and inquiry into students’ learning and effective principles of teaching and learning. Problems are addressed by everyone in the organization by means of learning to work through challenges instead of applying quick fixes. The elements of communities described above are included.</p>
<p>Professional Learning Communities</p> 	<p>Collaborative improvements and decisions are informed by but not dependent on scientific and statistical evidence. They are guided by experienced collective judgment and pushed forward by challenging conversations about effective and ineffective practice. The elements of communities and learning communities described above are included.</p>

Expectations and Work of Professional Learning Communities

Teams of teachers, staff, and administrators who work together on common goals for school improvement comprise PLCs. High-achieving PLCs analyze gaps in student learning, develop SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound) goals, focus on student learning needs, and are measured by evidence of success. PLCs work together to seek out best practices, test them in the classroom, continuously improve processes, and focus on results. These routine practices (National Center for Literacy Education, Awsumb-Nelson, 2014, LOCI data, pg. 19, February 2016) include:

- Co-creating lessons;
- Co-creating assessments; and
- Analyzing student work.

Based on these routine practices, teachers develop appropriate intervention or enrichment strategies to ensure greater achievement for all students.

DoDEA Expectations

Members of PLCs adhere to a common set of agreements about how they will work together. The agreements of DoDEA's PLCs are listed below.

- Our purpose will always be on improving student learning and achievement.
- We will focus on examining data from student work, instruction, assessments, and dilemmas of practice to improve our teaching craft.
- We will maximize professionalism and productivity by implementing team-building structures, such as norms and agendas, and by using processes and protocols to structure dialogue in ways that build trust and are inclusive.
- We will ground our decisions and instructional changes in best-practice research.

Teacher Voice and Engagement

PLCs work best when they are developed based on how they provide the most benefits for student learning and student growth. Teachers may collaborate in cross-content subject areas, grade levels, or within like subject-matter content PLCs. Using norms and protocols, teachers co-plan units/lessons, co-develop assessments, and co-analyze student work to examine and improve practices that result in student growth. Additional focus for PLC work comes through using essential questions, such as:

- What we want our students to know and be able to do;
- How will we know if students have learned;
- What will we do if student are not learning or already know the learning; and
- Focused questions fuel deeper discussions to support student learning.

Elementary, middle, and high schools structure their collaboration time within their master schedules. School leaders, union or association representatives, and school faculty will provide feedback to the principal prior to the development of a master schedule for purposeful collaboration focused on learning and results. Additional consideration needs to be given to accommodate singleton content teachers. Leveraging technology to allow remote and singleton content area teachers opportunities to collaborate with their peers through virtual PLCs has to be part of the master schedule discussion.



Attributes of High-Performing PLCs

(adapted from *Learning by Doing* (2016))

DoDEA's PLCs are committed to continuous improvement and are characterized by the following attributes:

FOCUS ON LEARNING RESULTS	<p>by identifying essential outcomes and systemically responding when students do not meet their learning targets as they move toward those outcomes. Such a process includes common formative assessments (monitoring tools), regular monitoring of student performance with the aid of a variety of data, and the development of effective, research-based interventions.</p>
FOCUS ON SHARED VISION AND VALUES	<p>by developing a deep, shared commitment to the learning, development, and wellbeing of both students and the adults who work with them. This requires a conscious process of alignment and a focus on what is possible. A shared vision should reflect the collective beliefs of all stakeholders within a school and should be expressed as a clear set of guiding principles</p>
SUPPORT AND FOCUS ON SHARED LEADERSHIP	<p>by adhering to a model in which all participants have an equal voice and a responsibility for decision making related to improving teaching and learning. In this model, all stakeholder interests are balanced and all members are involved in developing, adopting, and observing ground rules and protocols that clarify how team members will work together and fulfill their responsibilities. (Duhigg, Charles, 2016).</p>
FOCUS ON A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION	<p>in which all participants learn from one another, create momentum to fuel continuous improvement, and engage in discussions focused on curriculum/product, instruction/delivery, and assessment/monitoring that promote collective responsibility and accountability.</p>
ENGAGE IN COLLECTIVE INQUIRY AND LEARNING	<p>by relentlessly questioning the status quo—seeking new methods, testing them, and then reflecting on results. The inquiry process builds shared knowledge by clarifying the questions that the group explores together; building the capacity of each staff member to implement beliefs, attitudes, strategies, and processes that will result in all students achieving at a high level; having time and space dedicated to collaborative interactions among staff; and learning from each other through peer observation to deepen their knowledge of content and instructional practice for continuous growth.</p>
EXHIBIT MUTUAL TRUST AND RESPECT	<p>by honoring the expertise of others; building a sense of loyalty, commitment, and effectiveness necessary for shared decision making and the establishment of collegiality; and creating an environment in which risk-taking is encouraged, supported, and reinforced.</p>

The mission of PLCs is to increase student achievement in all schools, eliminate achievement gaps, and increase teacher effectiveness. *DoDEA Community Strategic Plan* (Volume II School Years 2013/14-2017/18) targets the strategic goals of:

STUDENT EXCELLENCE	SCHOOL EXCELLENCE
Challenge each student to maximize his or her potential and to excel academically, socially, emotionally, and physically for life, college, and career readiness.	Develop and sustain each school to be high-performing within an inclusive environment of innovation, collaboration, continuous renewal, and caring relationships.

This PLC Guidance supports both the *DoDEA Community Strategic Plan* and the CCRS implementation.



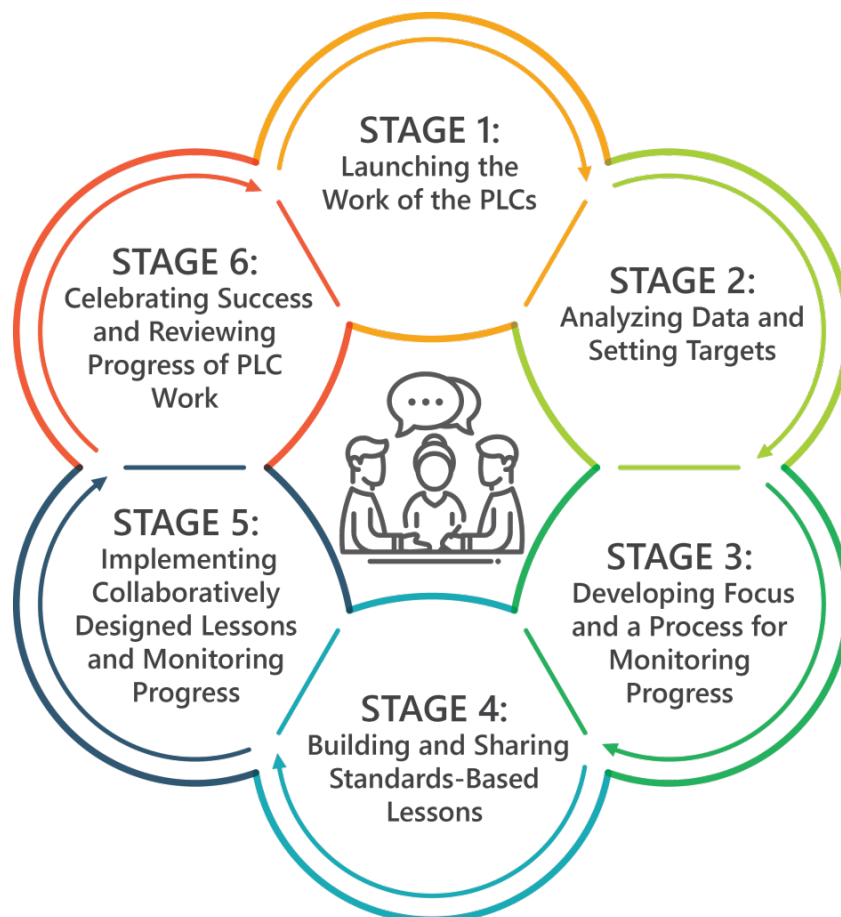
Stages of Collaboration for Professional Learning Communities

Establishing and strengthening effective instructional teams is challenging work. For that reason, this PLCs Guidance provides examples and a cycle to help inform the work of teachers, school leaders, and district leaders based on prevailing research on PLCs. The goal is to collaboratively create guidance that is framed in a manner that makes sense to those who are closest to the work of structuring PLCs.

This PLCs Guidance delineates one way that the work of structuring PLCs can be envisioned. The stages are a process that is not linear, but it is recursive. This vision unfolds in the six stages as part of a modified cycle (see diagram below). Those who use this PLCs Guidance in the field are also encouraged to tailor it as they deem necessary to meet the specific needs of their district, schools and teachers.

It is hoped that this PLCs Guidance is a useful framework for furthering the development of PLCs system-wide, in service of providing high-quality learning opportunities for all students and ensuring that they are able to achieve at their highest potential. *While the arrows indicate a cyclical direction, the stages of collaboration are not linear, but they move forward, backward or across, based on the work of the group.*

Stages of PLC Collaboration Process



Cycle of PLC Stages of Collaboration with Roles and Responsibilities

(adapted from Massachusetts Department of Education PLC Guidance)

Six stages guide the implementation of PLCs to support the development and implementation of effective high-quality PLCs. *The guidance stages provide the best practices and what each stage might look like.*

Districts and schools are responsible for providing more targeted guidance and professional learning to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of PLCs. This PLCs Guidance provides PLCs' best practices in order to juxtapose current practices against these practices to determine areas for continued growth. The same expectation for school PLCs are also expected of the Centers for Instructional Leadership and for the district offices.

The stages of collaboration, which are listed below, provide the suggested best practices by role for the PLC team, the principal and the leadership team, and the superintendent and district leadership team.



Stage 1: Launching the PLC Work: Establish a Sense of Urgency

Purpose: To increase professional collaboration focused on instruction and student results —

Lay the Foundation

PLC Team Actions	Principal and Leadership Team (LT) Actions	Superintendent Team Actions	Sample Evidence
<i>Establish Vision and Purpose</i>			
<p>Establish sense of urgency. Align school vision to example of an effective vision statement: <i>All students will achieve academic growth and will graduate with the skills necessary to succeed at the next level without remediation in a safe, fair, and caring school community.</i></p> <p>Select method of maintaining meeting minutes. Keep minutes and, based on timeline established by the principal, share minutes with leadership</p>	<p>Lead discussion to instill PLCs use of data and case studies from international, national, state, and local levels. Format data in a way that highlights urgent need for improvement.</p> <p>Facilitate teamwork to align school and district visions, and to ensure that school vision meets criteria for an effective vision.</p> <p>Communicate expectation for LT to maintain meeting minutes and share them with key leaders.</p> <p>Share school vision with full school community once statement is approved.</p>	<p>Ensure that the principal, LT, and PLCs have systems and structures (including sample agendas, sample schedules, and means of obtaining assistance with scheduling) to improve instruction and student learning.</p> <p>Utilize portions of regular meetings with principals to establish an administrative PLC/principals' network.</p> <p>Provide mentoring to support implementation.</p> <p>Work with principal to align district plan/school plan/PLC work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School vision that is student focused, measureable, and aligned to district vision. Vision is communicated to all stakeholders, verbally and posting Team agendas, minutes that reflect a sense of urgency through established targets, timelines, and deadlines for activities, and is focused on the work.
<i>Establishing PLCs and Setting Norms</i>			
<p>Create shared understanding of common goals for PLC work. Goals indicate commitment to improve instruction and student learning through collaboration around creating and implementing common standards-based lessons with embedded formative assessments, providing feedback, and monitoring student achievement.</p>	<p>Provide research and readings that highlight the way PLCs work and their potential impact on instruction. Establish common purpose for the work of PLCs.</p>	<p>Ensure that district representatives are in attendance at some of the principals' meetings so that they can reinforce PLC goals when they interface with faculty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers can describe goal of PLCs and work of the team. Characteristics of PLCs are posted in meeting rooms.

PLC Team Actions	Principal and Leadership Team (LT) Actions	Superintendent Team Actions	Sample Evidence
<p>Utilize PLC meeting time that has been carved out by principal and LT.</p>	<p>Design master instructional schedule (with feedback from all staff) to provide adequate meeting time for PLCs.</p> <p>Set consistent “sacred” time for PLC meeting sessions.</p> <p>(Note: one meeting per week, minimum 45 minutes.)</p>	<p>Set expectations for district office to stay apprised of frequency of PLC meetings and to help in setting periodic agendas in collaboration with principals.</p> <p>Use regular meetings with principals to allow school leaders to touch base with district representatives (curriculum and Instructional Systems Specialists [ISSs]) at completion of key stages in development of PLC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLC schedules are posted in meeting rooms or online. • Posted agendas (online or kept where available).
<p>Establish behavioral and procedural norms. Set norms to make the PLC work in a non-threatening manner and focus on student improvement. PLC assigns roles such as secretary and timekeeper and determine means for collecting feedback on the process</p>	<p>Lead initial meeting(s) to build capacity of PLC leaders who will eventually facilitate.</p> <p>Ensure that PLC sets norms that enable PLC work to unfold in a non-threatening environment. Ensure that team members know that data analysis done by PLC is for the purpose of improving student performance.</p> <p>Set agendas for first meeting. Collaboratively set agendas and move to gradual release of the PLC. Regularly emphasize the importance of PLC work.</p>	<p>Use regular principal meetings to provide opportunities for school leaders to confer with district representatives on agendas for initial PLC meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed norms are posted in PLC meeting room(s) and focus on collaboration and on commitment to continuous improvement.

PLC Team Actions	Principal and Leadership Team (LT) Actions	Superintendent Team Actions	Sample Evidence
<p>Establish behavioral and procedural norms. Set norms to make the PLC work in a non-threatening manner and focus on student improvement. Assign roles such as secretary and timekeeper and determine means for collecting feedback on the process.</p>	<p>Lead discussion on characteristics of high-performing teams and share text references on PLCs.</p> <p>Suggested Resources: <i>The Wisdom of Teams; The Five Dysfunctions of a Team; Learning by Doing; and On Common Ground</i></p>	<p>Provide research and support regarding high-performing teams to principals. Encourage district representatives to review suggested literature.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on their understanding of PLCs, the team begins to function effectively. For example, they ground their work in data and stay focused on student learning.

Stage 2: Analyzing Data and Setting Targets

Purpose: To develop a culture of data-based instructional decision-making/continuous evaluation of progress across the cycle of learning and working together — Focus on Results

PLC Team Actions	Principal and Leadership Team (LT) Actions	Superintendent Teams Action	Sample Evidence
<i>Review Current School-Wide Targets/Goals based on Data</i>			
<p>Review strengths and gaps in performance. Review school-wide improvement targets that will already have been set by the LT, and confirm priority areas of improvement focus by looking at data.</p> <p>Consider other grade-level, subjects and course data and determine correlation between data and the targets set by the LT for students in the aggregate and for subgroups, as needed.</p>	<p>Lead the LT in setting school-wide improvement targets and preparing charts, graphs, and tables of data to be used at PLC meetings.</p> <p>Ensure that PLC performance targets are aligned with Continuous School Improvement goals (not separate targets)</p> <p>Present approved school-wide targets to PLCs.</p> <p>Provide necessary professional development in data analysis.</p>	<p>Facilitate timely data-sharing between the district and principal/LT.</p> <p>Arrange for professional learning on data analysis and root cause analysis to be provided to key school leaders.</p> <p>Ensure that school-based professionals have access to data analysis tools and technical assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School-wide improvement targets are set by LT, are confirmed by PLCs, and are posted in PLC meeting room(s).
<i>Setting Grade-Level or Course Targets</i>			
<p>Using data, establish targets for each grade, content area, and/or course, depending on school configuration or need.</p> <p>Express each target as a % and # of students targeted to move between each of the proficiency levels.</p> <p>Confirm these targets in light of school-wide targets set by LT. (SMART Goals)</p>	<p>Review each list of targets to be certain that targeted percentage/ numeric increases are sufficient to make progress and are aligned with school-wide targets. (Non-tested subjects are part of this process.)</p> <p>Provide data for grade levels, subjects, and courses.</p>	<p>At regular principal meetings, each principal shares PLC deliverables, including lists of targets.</p> <p>Ensure that the district has clear expectations and a coordinated approach to administrating pre- and post-tests and other assessments, so that data is consistent across classes/school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of grade-level or course targets are produced for each grade and subject (elementary/middle) or for each course (high school). PLC targets are set.
<i>Setting Classroom and Individual Targets</i>			
<p>Set classroom targets. Teachers in PLCs set % and # targets (SMART) for individual classrooms. Specialists such as content coaches, experts in language acquisition and sheltering content for English language learners (ELLs), and</p>	<p>Lead review of each list of targets to be certain that targeted increases are sufficient for school to make progress to achieve school-wide goals.</p>	<p>Arrange for district representatives to meet regularly with principal to confirm that targets for aggregate, for grade levels, and for subgroups are in alignment, and to confirm that all targets align with district goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom targets are set.

PLC Team Actions	Principal and Leadership Team (LT) Actions	Superintendent Teams Action	Sample Evidence
<p>special education teachers assist with target-setting. Targets align with grade, subject, course targets, and school-wide targets.</p>	<p>Coordinate integration of specialists and support staff into PLC work.</p>		
<p>Set individual student growth targets for student, using each student’s name and particular performance results. Reference classroom targets as part of process. Use GRADE, BAS, PSAT, SAT-9, district- or school-designed pre- and post-tests, end-of-unit tests, and/or other assessments deemed appropriate.</p>	<p>Review each list of targets to be certain that targeted gains will result in school’s achievement.</p>	<p>Ensure that there is a review of all targets—from school-wide to individual student targets—for the purpose of assessing needs at the school level and making decisions about deployment of resources and assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual targets are set for each student.

Stage 3: Developing Focus and a Process for Monitoring Progress

Purpose: To identify skill, conceptual understanding, and problem solving gaps/needs and set appropriate targets — Focus on Results

PLC Team Actions	Principal and Leadership Team Actions	Superintendent Teams Action	Sample Evidence
<i>Prioritizing Students' Skill, Conceptual Understanding, and Problem Solving Needs</i>			
<p>Determine areas of greatest need (gap between student performance and standard[s]) in terms of students' skill development, conceptual understanding, and/or problem solving by undertaking item analysis. Identify standards/strands with which students struggle (approximately three or four areas of need by grade for each content area).</p> <p>Use data to prioritize areas of need (gaps).</p>	<p>Approve areas of greatest need identified by PLCs. Consult with PLCs about order in which teachers will address needs through instruction. Document and share information with district representatives and superintendent via written statements of prioritized needs.</p> <p>Ensure that student support services (academic interventions and social support services) are considered.</p>	<p>Ensure that district representatives stay apprised of PLC discussions about student skill and knowledge needs and curricular and instructional programs' ability to address those needs.</p> <p>Make certain that district-level curriculum directors and content and support specialists use LT and PLC data in curriculum and instruction decisions.</p> <p>Arrange for review of principal's statements. Access key district personnel who can assist with addressing areas of greatest need.</p>	<p>Needs assessments are completed and are shared with school-level colleagues and other PLCs.</p> <p>Areas of greatest need are prioritized, and brief narratives to justify the prioritization are prepared.</p>
<i>Planning to Address Individual Needs</i>			
<p>Establish a process for monitoring each student's progress. For example, create a folder or use as an existing work folder to document progress made and services accessed to address identified needs.</p>	<p>Ensure that teachers understand the benefit of monitoring individual student progress.</p> <p>Establish process for charting and monitoring class, grade, subject area, and course performance data on monthly basis to determine progress toward meeting targets.</p>	<p>Facilitate development of student performance monitoring system. Provide training and/or communications to foster principals' and teachers' understanding of the true benefit of maintaining and using a system for monitoring student progress.</p> <p>Support mapping of progress through use of technology and provision of district-developed electronic templates.</p>	<p>A process that has been developed by teachers and/or the district and school leaders exists to help with monitoring of individual student progress.</p>

Stage 4: Building and Sharing Standards-Based Lessons

Purpose: To ensure that teachers have instructional resources necessary to address prioritized areas of need — Learning is Fundamental

PLC Team Actions	Principal and Shared Leadership Team Actions	Superintendent Teams Action	Sample Evidence
<i>Reviewing Curriculum and Guidelines in Relation to Needs</i>			
<p>Review standards-based curriculum to identify where essential learning standards are tied to areas of greatest need. Determine how needs are addressed across content areas.</p> <p>Review curriculum map and pacing guides to determine when areas of greatest need (performance gaps) are addressed. Align planned activities and needs.</p>	<p>Advocate for any necessary adjustments to curriculum, pacing guides, and instructional materials that are highlighted through PLC work.</p>	<p>Ensure that standards-based curriculum maps are in place, are aligned with DoDEA <i>Curriculum Frameworks</i>, and are reviewed as part of curriculum renewal cycle for each content area. District-provided resources should include performance standards, suggestions about student work that demonstrates proficiency, and materials to address needs of all students.</p> <p>Facilitate process for aligning needs and resources.</p>	<p>Alignments between areas of greatest need and grade-level subject or course curricula are completed.</p> <p>This includes documentation of identified needs matched with appropriate resources.</p>
<i>Establishing Performance Measures and Engaging in Formative Assessment</i>			
<p>Commit to strategies for formatively assessing students.</p> <p>Identify type(s) of work that students will produce as evidence of proficiency, including ways (for example, standards-based rubrics) that work will be assessed to gauge quality.</p>	<p>Provide professional learning on building and implementing common formative assessments.</p> <p>Provide the LT and PLCs with assessment inventory (resources) so that all team members know which assessments are given and what each one targets/diagnoses.</p>	<p>Ensure that district provides training in building and administering formative assessments/strategies.</p> <p>Support and encourage the development and use of common assessments and assessment strategies for all content areas.</p> <p>Structure an assessment inventory to highlight curriculum assessments, timeline on which they are given, and what they diagnose.</p>	<p>Common strategies—and sometimes, common performance tasks, tests, or homework assignments—are developed collaboratively to formatively assess students' learning.</p>

PLC Team Actions	Principal and Shared Leadership Team Actions	Superintendent Teams Action	Sample Evidence
<i>Collaboratively Working with Colleagues to Build Lessons</i>			
<p>Collaboratively develop standards-based units (or lessons) linked to essential standards and areas of greatest need.</p> <p>Build lessons while keeping in mind differentiation, scaffolding (Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development), and knowledge of focused instruction and formative assessment.</p>	<p>Develop/provide standards-based unit and lesson design protocols. Train teachers in their use. (Protocols should include specification of standards, assessments for learning, and methods of differentiation of instruction, rubrics, and materials.)</p> <p>Support development of collaboratively designed standards-based lessons by assigning teacher leaders or requesting ISSs to participate regularly in PLCs meetings.</p>	<p>Allocate resources to conduct professional learning and provide templates for standards-based lesson design.</p>	<p>Standards-based lessons aligned to district curriculum maps and areas of greatest need are built.</p> <p>Descriptions of student work that will demonstrate proficiency are determined.</p>

Stage 5: Implementing Collaboratively Designed Lessons and Monitoring progress

Purpose: To ensure that the taught curriculum is well planned, data-based, and targeted to students' needs — Learning is Fundamental and Focus on Results

PLC Team Actions	Principal and Shared Leadership Team Actions	Superintendent Teams Action	Sample Evidence
<i>Using Collaboratively Built Lessons</i>			
<p>Implement standards-based lessons using embedded formative assessment strategies in individual classrooms. Provide students with feedback on how to improve their work, and encourage student-to-student feedback.</p> <p>Gather evidence to show lessons' effectiveness. Track lesson effectiveness, student progress, need for changes to lesson structure, and need for student remediation. Seek peer feedback from colleagues.</p>	<p>Deploy coaches/teacher leaders/ISSs to support teachers in researching strategies that improve student performance, particularly in areas of greatest need.</p> <p>Oversee implementation of collaboratively developed standards-based lessons.</p>	<p>Arrange for ISSs/teacher leaders/coaches to receive adequate professional learning and support in carrying out their work.</p> <p>Ensure that ISSs/teacher leaders/coaches have good understanding of effective standards-based practice.</p> <p>Provide models of effective feedback to students.</p> <p>Use regular principal meetings to have principals report evidence of implementation of instructional priorities. Encourage district representatives to join principals for periodic discussions about instructional practices.</p> <p>Establish regular district data reviews to consider evidence across schools.</p>	<p>Feedback to students is tied to standards, specific, and co-constructed with students when possible, informs students about how to improve, and is used by students.</p> <p>Student progress is mapped particularly in the areas of greatest need.</p> <p>There is documentation on instructional strategies that have been employed and that have proven effective in reducing gaps in areas of greatest need.</p> <p>There is an archive of PLC documents showing how lessons are built, shared, reflected on, and refined.</p>
<i>Working Collaboratively to Determine Level of Student Learning</i>			
<p>Analyze and score student work produced as evidence of learning using agreed-upon standards-based protocol.</p>	<p>Ensure that PLCs have access to protocol for scoring student work.</p> <p>Implement process for collecting, charting, and monitoring classroom, grade, subject area, and course performance data on monthly basis to determine progress toward meeting targets.</p>	<p>Provide protocol for analyzing student work.</p> <p>Take steps toward ensuring that standards-based teaching and learning are accompanied by a standards-based grading system that reflects accurate reporting of student achievement.</p>	<p>Rubrics tailored to specific student assignments and standards are used to score work. Results are recorded.</p> <p>Student work is displayed with related standards-based rubrics and teacher commentary.</p>

PLC Team Actions	Principal and Shared Leadership Team Actions	Superintendent Teams Action	Sample Evidence
	<p>Provide feedback to PLCs that relates to displayed student work and the standards, rubrics, including the teacher commentary that it contains.</p> <p>Establish focus for some PLC meetings based on students' needs, as evidenced by their scored work.</p> <p>Problem solve around barriers to adjusting instruction to meet students' needs.</p>	<p>Arrange for quarterly reviews of student performance data between principal and district representatives. Review progress toward meeting targets.</p> <p>Ensure that principal receives feedback on PLC work and student performance, and ensure that feedback is appropriate for sharing with faculty members.</p> <p>Develop practices that enable principals to address instances of faculty members not meeting expectations/ addressing specific needs of students.</p> <p>Facilitate creation of benchmarks, exemplars, and some rubrics for grade levels and courses, and ensure that they are aligned with standards.</p>	<p>Samples of student work are saved via the school's process for monitoring student progress.</p>
<i>Ensuring that Interventions/Safety Nets are Effectively Utilized</i>			
<p>Based on frequent formative and summative assessment data, discuss regrouping strategies (as deemed appropriate within and across classrooms and grades) prior to activation of safety nets.</p> <p>Reach consensus on how to customize and utilize an intervention/safety net system.</p>	<p>Create school-wide system of interventions.</p> <p>Carve time out of schedule to allow interventions. Allocate resources to support interventions/safety nets.</p> <p>Ensure that safety nets are appropriately customized and are effective.</p>	<p>Create district-wide model of intervention.</p> <p>Establish process for reviewing each school's master schedule and ensuring that supports are in place. Confirm that district-provided safety nets are adequate.</p> <p>Identify and engage appropriate community partners to enhance interventions/safety nets.</p>	<p>There are effective protocols for moving students in and out of safety nets, and those protocols are used.</p> <p>There is documentation of movement of students through safety nets.</p> <p>There is documentation on evaluation of the safety nets' effectiveness.</p>

PLC Team Actions	Principal and Shared Leadership Team Actions	Superintendent Teams Action	Sample Evidence
<p>Confer with counselor/students with disabilities/ELLs to review student progress and determine mobility in and out of interventions/safety nets.</p> <p>Make suggestions to providers and to the LT about ways to improve delivery of interventions.</p>	<p>Ensure that there is a process by which counselors/students with disabilities/ELLs, intervention specialists, and parents regularly collaborate.</p> <p>Ensure that interventions/safety nets are provided by staff members whose qualifications match level of intervention needed.</p>	<p>Make certain that curriculum materials, as well as supplemental resources to be used with students at various levels of development and language proficiency, are in place.</p> <p>Oversee and provide input on funding for safety nets.</p> <p>Ensure that coaches/ISSs/teacher leaders know how to support teachers who are working with targeted groups.</p>	

Stage 6: Celebrating Success and Reviewing Progress of PLC work

Purpose: To note small wins and use them as platform from which to achieve greater gains —
Effective Communication and Learning Foundation

PLC Team Actions	Principal and Shared Leadership Team Actions	Superintendent Teams Action	Sample Evidence
<i>Archiving Effective Lessons</i>			
Archive only those lessons with proven success at getting students to proficiency.	<p>Ensure use of protocol for archiving effective lessons.</p> <p>Within school, publicly celebrate examples of lessons that have helped students meet targets.</p> <p>Facilitate a process for communicating students' progress from grade to grade.</p>	<p>Establish protocol for archiving and sharing only the most effective lessons.</p> <p>Facilitate creation of bank of effective lessons.</p> <p>With school committee, ensure that there is public recognition of specific examples of improvement in instruction that have resulted in improved student performance.</p>	<p>Successful lessons and strategies are archived and shared. Samples of student work at different proficiency levels are produced through implementation of lessons and are saved.</p> <p>Formal process for communicating students' progress (and sharing samples of student work) from grade to grade is developed and used.</p>
<i>Reaching Out to Parents</i>			
Frequently update parents on their children's progress and on changes to instruction that are designed to address their children's specific needs.	<p>Coordinate gatherings of parents and, at these gatherings, make student work and changes to instruction public.</p> <p>Develop public relations plan to guide process for sharing instructional successes with the broader community.</p>	Support principal in reaching out to parents. Participate in key gatherings.	Timely progress reports and student work samples are shared with parents.
<i>Reflecting on the Work of the Team</i>			
Complete year-end review of PLCs impact on instruction and learning.	Encourage PLCs to consider structural and other changes that teams could make to ensure that their future work is even more successful.	Request and review school-generated report on PLC changes for coming school year.	Brief report is generated to describe how PLC activities will be improved in coming school year.

Appendix

Research

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